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Abstract

Background

Skin conditions contribute significantly to the global burden of diseases and are among the leading causes of non-fatal disease burden. Children living in orphanage centres are vulnerable to several conditions including dermatological disorders, and there is limited data on the burden of these conditions among orphans in Tanzania. This study was carried out to determine the pattern of dermatological conditions and contributing factors among orphans in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 420 children aged less than 18 years from 12 orphanage centres in Dar es Salaam. Guided interviews using structured questionnaires were carried out to obtain socio-demographic and clinical data from participants. Clinical examination was performed for each participant and whenever indicated skin scrapings and biopsy were obtained.

Results

Four hundred and twenty participants were recruited out of which 281 (66.9%) were male, mean and median ages of participants were 11 ± 3.7 and 12 years, respectively. Two hundred and twenty-five (53.6%) participants were aged between 6 and 12 years. Proportion of children with dermatological manifestations among participants was 57.4%. Two hundred and ninety-six diagnoses were made comprising of 192 (64.9%) infections and 104 (35.1%) non-infectious conditions. Tinea capitis was the commonest infection while acne vulgaris was the most common non-infectious condition. Proportionately more male children were affected as compared to female ones, $p = 0.006$

Conclusion

Skin conditions are common among children living in orphanage centres in Dar es Salaam. Infectious conditions were predominant conditions and male children were more affected than female children. Reducing crowding and improving hygienic practices in these centres will be important in reducing the burden of these conditions